

Sources: Jantezen Franklin: Author of Love Like You've Never Been Hurt  
Carlin Lawrence: Author of The Self-Destructive Sin of Unforgiveness

# Love Like You've NEVER Been Hurt

Matthew 18:7 (KJV) Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

# GOD is LOVE

- ▶ 1 John 4:7-12 “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.
- ▶ <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.
- ▶ <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.
- ▶ <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
- ▶ <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
- ▶ <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

# Because of Love, By This We Know.....

- ▶ **1 John 4:13-21** “ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.
- ▶ <sup>15</sup> **Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.** <sup>16</sup> So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.
- ▶ <sup>17</sup> **By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.** <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.
- ▶ <sup>19</sup> **We love because he first loved us.** <sup>20</sup> If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot<sup>[a]</sup> love God whom he has not seen. <sup>21</sup> **And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.**

# Some Truths About Love

- ▶ **The Excellence of Love: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 Paraphrased:** *Anything done , no matter how incredible it might appear, if it is not motivated by love it is worthless!*
- ▶ **1 Corinthians 13:4 -7** "Love endures with patience *and* serenity, love is kind *and* thoughtful, and is not jealous *or* envious; love does not brag and is not proud *or* arrogant.
- ▶ <sup>5</sup> It is not rude; it is not self-seeking, it is not provoked [nor overly sensitive and easily angered]; it does not take into account a wrong *endured*.
- ▶ <sup>6</sup> It does not rejoice at injustice, but rejoices with the truth [when right and truth prevail].
- ▶ <sup>7</sup> Love bears all things [regardless of what comes], believes all things [looking for the best in each one], hopes all things [remaining steadfast during difficult times], endures all things [without weakening]."
  - ▶ **These aren't just empty words!!!**

# Some Truths About Love

## Love NEVER Fails - It Remains

- ▶ **1 Corinthians 13: 8,13** - Love never fails [it never fades nor ends]. But as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for the gift of special knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part, and we prophesy in part [for our knowledge is fragmentary and incomplete].
- ▶ <sup>13</sup> And now there remain: faith [abiding trust in God and His promises], hope [confident expectation of eternal salvation], love [unselfish love for others growing out of God's love for me], these three [the choicest graces]; but the greatest of these is love.

# Love is Powerful

## Supernatural Version

- ▶ Unconditional
- ▶ Selfless
- ▶ Consistently Strong
- ▶ Obedience to God
- ▶ Not an option
- ▶ Non-selective
- ▶ Forgives unconditionally
- ▶ Love our enemies

## Mankind's Version

- ▶ Conditional
- ▶ Self-seeking/Selfish
- ▶ Consistently inconsistent
- ▶ Obedience to flesh
- ▶ Optional
- ▶ You've got to earn it
- ▶ Does not forgive
- ▶ Destroy our enemies

# Suffering Does Not Blot Out Love

- ▶ **Romans 5:3-5:** <sup>3</sup> And not only *this*, but [with joy] let us exult in our sufferings *and* rejoice in our hardships, knowing that hardship (distress, pressure, trouble) produces patient endurance;
- ▶ <sup>4</sup> and endurance, proven character (spiritual maturity); and proven character, hope *and* confident assurance [of eternal salvation].
- ▶ <sup>5</sup> Such hope [in God's promises] never disappoints *us*, because God's love has been abundantly poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

# Love Requires Us To Forgive - It's Not An Option!!!

- ▶ **John 14:15,21** - “If you [really] love Me, you will keep *and* obey My commandments.
- ▶ **V. 21:** The person who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who [really] loves Me; and whoever [really] loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him [I will make Myself real to him].”

\*\*\*\*\*

## A command:

- ▶ **Matthew 6:14-15** “<sup>14</sup> For if you forgive others their trespasses [their reckless and willful sins], your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
- ▶ <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive others [nurturing your hurt and anger with the result that it interferes with your relationship with God], then your Father will not forgive your trespasses.



# Love Requires Us To Forgive - There's no limit

- ▶ **Luke 17: 3-4** “Pay attention *and* always be on guard [looking out for one another]! If your brother sins *and* disregards God’s precepts, solemnly warn him; and if he repents *and* changes, forgive him.
- ▶ ***<sup>4</sup> Even if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times and says, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him [that is, give up resentment and consider the offense recalled and annulled].”***

# The Self-Destructive Sin of Unforgiveness

- ▶ Unforgiveness locks the unforgiving person in their own self-made prison
- ▶ Unforgiveness is toxic and destroys from within
- ▶ Unforgiveness causes bitterness
- ▶ Romans 12:17-21 <sup>17</sup> **Never repay anyone evil for evil.** Take thought for what is right *and* gracious *and* proper in the sight of everyone. <sup>18</sup> If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.
- ▶ <sup>19</sup> **Beloved, never avenge yourselves,** but leave the way open for God’s wrath [and His judicial righteousness]; for it is written [in Scripture], “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord.
- ▶ <sup>20</sup> **BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM; IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR BY DOING THIS YOU WILL HEAP [e]BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.”**
- ▶ <sup>21</sup> **Do not be overcome *and* conquered by evil,** but overcome evil with good.

# The Self-Destructive Sin of Unforgiveness

- ▶ “Unforgiveness” doesn’t yield the right of vengeance to the Lord; the bitter person wants to become their own god and becomes his/her own worst enemy—destroying their self. Unforgiveness and bitterness are often hidden sins.
- ▶ No one may notice your bitterness and unforgiveness at first, but the poison is doing its hidden work inside your heart.
- ▶ Unforgiveness is usually a result of ungodly pride and self-righteousness.
  - ▶ “I have a right to feel like I feel!”

# The Self-Destructive Sin of Unforgiveness

- ▶ Unforgiveness is often the sin that's committed against those we're the closest to and dearest to us.
- ▶ There's the sayings "Familiarity breeds contempt" & "Why do we always hurt the ones we love." Unforgiveness is often a family sin. Husbands won't forgive their wives; wives won't forgive their husbands; children won't forgive their parents and parents won't forgive their children.
- ▶ Unforgiveness among fellow believers is common; Christians who will not talk to each other, cannot even look at each other, and wouldn't dare sit on the same side of the auditorium. Pastors who will not forgive church members, and believers who will not forgive their pastor. It's easy to see why there's so many prayerless and powerless churches!
- ▶ Only the power of the Holy Spirit can give us the grace to truly forgive.

# We Have Work To Do

- ▶ **The Ministry of Reconciliation**

- ▶ **2 Corinthians 5: 18-19:** <sup>18</sup> But all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ [making us acceptable to Him] and gave us the ministry of reconciliation [so that by our example we might bring others to Him], <sup>19</sup> that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting people's sins against them [but canceling them]. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation [that is, restoration to favor with God].

- ▶ **The Ministry of Comfort & Encouragement**

- ▶ **2 Corinthians 1:2-4:** Grace to you and peace [inner calm and spiritual well-being] from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- ▶ <sup>3</sup> Blessed [gratefully praised and adored] be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts *and* encourages us in every trouble so that we will be able to comfort *and* encourage those who are in any kind of trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

# Concluding Thoughts

- ▶ Let's not leave 2023 burdened with unforgiveness
- ▶ Let's remember that our circumstances aren't greater than our God
- ▶ Let's get our focus off of ourselves
- ▶ Let's not allow pride to stunt our spiritual growth
- ▶ Let's get professional help if necessary
- ▶ Let's remember Hebrews 10:23-25 <sup>23</sup> Let us seize *and* hold tightly the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is reliable *and* trustworthy *and* faithful [to His word]; <sup>24</sup> and let us consider [thoughtfully] how we may encourage one another to love and to do good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking our meeting together [as believers for worship and instruction], as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more [faithfully] as you see the day [of Christ's return] approaching.
- ▶ Let's not forget that we need each other!